

Contact:
Morgan Valliant
Conservation Lands Manager
Missoula Parks and Recreation
552-6263
Cell: 214-2692
721-PARK
mvalliant@ci.missoula.mt.us

Contact:
Liz Bradley
Wildlife Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
(406) 542-5515
LBradley@mt.gov



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release through March 21, 2016

Mount Jumbo South Zone Closure Extended through March 21

City officials, in consultation with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologists, have extended the Mount Jumbo winter elk closure in the south zone through Monday, March 21. The closure may be extended further if necessary to protect wintering elk. The south zone includes all points south of the Saddle Road, which is located at the north end of Lincoln Hills Drive. The North zone of Mt. Jumbo (all points north of the Saddle road) will remain closed through April 30.

There have been daily sightings of 50-70 elk on top of Jumbo almost every day in March, as documented by Parks and Recreation volunteer “Elk Spotters” and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks biologists.

“Early spring is a really important time for elk because they’re coming out of the winter and are in the poorest physical condition they’ll be in all year,” says FWP wildlife biologist Liz Bradley. “Right now on Mt Jumbo they’re feeding on vegetation that is just beginning to green-up and this nutritious food is really important to them for replenishing the reserves they lost in the winter. They have been very visible on the mountain lately and have even been seen out feeding during the day so they are clearly telling us this is an important place for them to be right now. As the green-up progresses to higher elevations the elk will begin to move off the mountain and toward their summer range.”

The “L” trail and the US West easement road will remain open. Hikers must stay on the designated trails only—off-trail travel is prohibited. Dogs must be leashed on the “L” trail and US West road during the winter closure. Mount Jumbo’s North Zone remains closed until May 1.

Violations of the Mount Jumbo winter closure are punishable by fine. Please call 911 to report closure violations. Vehicle license plates or other identifying characteristics will help law enforcement issue citations to those who violate the closure.

The Mount Jumbo winter closure is mandated by the Mount Jumbo Management Plan and the City Conservation Lands Management plan, both of which were adopted by the City Council after extensive public processes. The City conducts an inter-agency review with Montana FWP and others when considering adaptations to the regular closure dates. Changes to the seasonal dates of the winter elk closure are largely based on weather conditions and movements of the herd. For more information, visit www.missoulaparks.org or phone 721-PARK.

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